

AB 1336 (Koretz)

Co Author: Senator O'Connell

As Introduced – February 23, 2001

“Pet Shops: Spay and Neuter”

FACT SHEET

PURPOSE

California suffers from a pet overpopulation crisis. The purpose of AB 1336 is to take another step towards alleviating the problem by going to its root, reducing animal births.

Additionally, the bill will also protect consumers from making poor investments when buying an animal.

SUMMARY

AB 1336 requires that every dog and cat must be spayed or neutered by a licensed veterinarian before being offered for sale at any pet store.

COMMENTS

In California every year hundreds of thousands of unwanted animals end up in shelters; the vast majority are destroyed. The financial burden of sheltering and euthanizing these animals currently falls solely upon taxpayers, the bulk of whom do not have pets. A 1991 study showed the tax

burden for animal control services in California to be \$102 million.

Unwanted animals not yet in shelters are a nuisance and threat to health and safety for citizens and for pets they care for. They are responsible for disease-carrying bites and droppings, noise, and traffic accidents.

Besides financial and personal safety concerns, most Americans have some concern for animal welfare. Reduction in animal births is the pet overpopulation solution most fair to taxpayers and most humane. It will be more acceptable to people than the mass destruction of pets. Rather than dealing with the unpleasant results of extreme pet overpopulation, shouldn't we be taking every single opportunity to stem the problem at its source?

An unsprayed female cat, her mate and all of their offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per year, can total 11,606,077 cats in only 9 years. A pair of unaltered dogs and all of their puppies, unaltered, can add up to 67,000 dogs in 6 years. (Source: Spay USA)

Though the bulk of pets in California are not purchased in pet stores, the above data shows that cutting down any source of unregulated reproduction can make a huge difference. Although 5 to 8 percent of dogs and cats in America are bought in pet stores (APPMA data), according to both the APPMA and the Humane Society, approximately fifty percent of animals are acquired from friends, from rescuers, as strays or as offspring of an already owned animal. That fifty percent, which we aim to reduce, includes pet store animal offspring.

People wishing to acquire an animal would be driven to adopt from shelters (further helping to alleviate the crisis) or buy from pet stores or breeders, boosting sales from both. However, anyone who wishes to breed an animal would buy that animal from a breeder.

There has been much recent publicity on the questionable breeding background of animals offered for sale in pet stores. According to NBC's multi-award winning news show Dateline, reputable breeders do not sell to pet stores. Most pet store puppies come from puppy mills, where professional breeding practices are ignored and the health of animals is compromised. Pet store animals have a higher incidence of genetic disease than either mixed breeds, or those acquired from reputable breeders. Thus the bill would serve to protect consumers wishing to breed, from making poor investments.

Although juvenile altering (the spay-neuter of puppies and kittens) before sale has been frowned upon in the past, juvenile altering has been proven safe, less stressful for the animal, and is now encouraged by many veterinarians. They say it is simpler since there is less body fat to hide the organs and less bleeding and the smaller organs can be

removed with only a tiny incision. Puppies and kittens require less anesthesia, burn it off more quickly and have shortened recovery time. This reduces the cost of anesthesia and of professional time. Any animal not fit to be spayed or neutered is not fit for sale. Thus consumers are protected from acquiring animals in poor health.

STATUS

Assembly Business & Professions
Committee – 5/8/01

SUPPORT

California Veterinary Medical
Association
Association of Veterinarians for Animal
Rights
CA Federation for Animal Legislation
SPCA Los Angeles
Pets in Need, Redwood City
Seal Beach Animal Care Center
Last Chance for Animals, San Diego
San Diego Animal Advocates
Humane Society of the United States
San Diego Humane Society and SPCA
Better Options for Neglected Strays
(BONES)
Several individuals

OPPOSITION

None on File

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